DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 300 620 CE 051 277

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TITLE Model Curriculum Programs and Services for Adult Learners.
PUB DATE Nov 88
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (Tulsa, OK, November 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Programs; *Adult Students; *College Programs; Educational Needs; Higher Education; Part Time Students; *Program Improvement; Special Degree Programs; Student College Relationship; *Student Personnel Services

ABSTRACT

Despite the abundance of information available regarding enrollment trends in higher education, few institutions are adequately prepared to offer educational experiences tailored for the newest phenomenon on campus, the adult part-time student. This group is expected to make up almost half of the undergraduate student body by 1992. Many of these students, who are working full tinme to support themselves and others, do not have the flexibility in their lives to adapt to programs and schedules already in existence in higher education. Institutions must reorganize in favor of the adult part-time student, especially in the scheduling of classes. Colleges fall into several areas on the continuum in meeting the needs of adult students, from those that ignore these students, through those that provide flexible scheduling for traditional programs, to those that create special adult degree programs. In one school in Oklahoma, for example, elementary education and business departments have combined resources to serve adult students by expanding existing programs. Student services (including general information, extended hours, child care, commuter service, housing, food service, health care, and placement services) should be increased in order to help adult students complete their college education. Creating a commitment on the part of universities to the needs of adult students is an ongoing task that requires extreme effort by faculty, staff, and administration. (KC)

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MODEL CURRICULUM PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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Despite the abundance of information available regarding enrollment trends in higher education, few institutions are adequately prepared to offer educational experiences tailored for the newest phenomenon on campus, the adult part-time student.

It is estimated that by 1992 49% of the undergraduate enrollment nationwide will be aged 25 and over, and 48% of all enrollment in higher education will be part-time (Trends in Adult Student Enrollment 1985). And even enrollment patterns are changing for students of traditional age. A Carnegie Foundation survey in 1986 revealed that at least 30 percent of the college students surveyed had dropped out for at least one semester since they had started college.

Many of these students, who are working full time to support themselves and others, do not have the flexibility in their lives to adapt to programs and schedules already in existence in higher education institutions. These colleges and universities may be facing declining enrollment and possible extinction of some programs if they do not make efforts to meet the needs of this adult student population.

Boyd (1981) asserts that "The management of decline is not a technique with which educators are experienced." He points to a need for institutions to reorganize in favor of the adult part-time student, citing scheduling of classes as a particular problem.

Adults are expected to "fit in" and adapt to the existing environment. They are expected to enroll in courses designed for

the "traditional" students, aged 18 through 22, attending full time, daytime courses, Monday through Friday, nine months per year. Colleges and universities seem to have ignored all research pointing toward the emerging population of adults on campus, struggling to adapt to the traditional programs.

Due to declining birth rates which have made fewer traditional students available for enrollment in higher education, and with changing enrollment patterns developing for all ages of students, institutions of higher education would do well to reassess their missions and priorities.

According to Cross (1981), problems with scheduling are given as learning barriers by 15 to 25 percent of all adult learners. And even though scheduling is one of the oldest and most common adjustments made to accommodate these students, the responses from higher education institutions are generally in terms of <u>reaction</u> rather than <u>action</u> in designing programs and services.

Apps (1981) categorized five types of institutions and their reactions to the increasing number of adult part-time students. The first group continues operations as if all students were traditional day-time, college-age enrollees, making no allowances for those who do not fit the mold. The second group differs from the first only in that they recruit the older students, recognize their existence, but refuse to make any changes in current programs for fear of lowering quality. A third group continues the traditional programs of degree and course offerings, but

makes major modifications in scheduling by offering weekend and late evening classes, with facilities and services available and accessible at nontraditional times. The fourth group does all the things the third group does, plus offers specifically designed degree programs with nontraditional schedules and study formats. The last group develops degree programs for older students only.

These classifications by which institutions are grouped in their services to older students might also be considered as progressions of change for individual institutions as they adapt to the emerging adult part-time student population.

The first two stages frequently blend, occurring so gradually that an institution is often unaware of a changing mission. And, except for demographic information, the institution might even be unaware that the student profile is changing.

Action replaces reaction at the third stage, when institutional leaders search for ways to better serve, enrich, and educate the new group on campus. At the same time, efforts are made to retain current enrollment of traditional students and to provide an attractive package for other nontraditional students.

By whatever means the decision is made to search for new ways to serve a new clientele, institutions which take the initiative have an opportunity to become leaders in the manner

described by Naisbitt (1982) by finding the parade and getting in front of it.

The changing age group is mentioned by George Keller as one of the most significant changes in higher education in recent years. He suggests that the increasing number of adults on campus indicates need for more weekend and evening courses (Keller 1983, p. 16). He also points to the tendency for students to attend community colleges before entering four-year colleges, and suggests that by 1990 more than half of all students, including some of the most gifted, will be studying part-time. But two particular statements he makes provide a sound base for building a new academic program. He notes that colleges and universities are becoming the center of knowledge in every community, and mentions, in addition to policemen, musicians, and others served by the institutions, "craftsmen hoping to start their own companies" (Keller 1983, p. 15). He further points to the downfall of the liberal arts curriculum, and suggests that economic returns are more likely to be foremost in the college graduate's mind.

This trend is further supported by Green and Levine who note declining interest in arts and humanities since the 1960s. They cite business as one of the current major fields of interest. They also emphasize the trend of student interest toward obtaining a "marketable" degree. Again, business is mentioned as one of the "roads to economic security in anxious and competitive times" (Green and Levine 1985, p. 12).

And with increasing attention in our society on the entrepreneur and the intrapreneur, it appears to be a good time to consider, in addition to the single course on entrepreneurship, a full curriculum addressing this new phenomenon.

The importance of the adult part-time student in higher education is now emerging in our State, especially in areas served by our regional universities at satellite campuses. At these remote locations, classes are offered mostly in evenings and on weekends, and would seem to serve special adult learning needs. However, a problem situation was emphasized recently at a Higher Education Center in southeastern Oklahoma when one of these nontraditional students, who had managed to complete all requirements for an elementary education degree while in part-time attendance, inquired as to what arrangements now would be made for him to complete his student teaching requirements with a similar schedule.

Another situation also came to light at this time. The elementary education degree, being the only complete program available for completion by the part-time student at this site, was producing more graduates than could be reasonably employed in that sparsely populated region, and the graduates were "place-bound" and could not seek employment outside a commuting range. As a matter of fact, many of them did not wish to change jobs or seek employment, desiring instead a degree for personal satisfaction or for purposes of job advancement.

Consideration of existing majors and degree programs provides a clear choice for adaptation at this particular Center. A strong business program already enrolling more older students on-campus than any other University program, with a faculty eager and willing to accommodate these needs, provides a ready solution. Further support for this choice comes from an internal Evening Studies Task Force Committee Survey (1980) which indicated business as the preferred field of study for evening and weekend programs.

The strong elementary education program already serving the adult part-time students, if combined and coordinated with the business degree, could with modifications move the institution into the fourth stage of service to the students with a specially designed program, and without involving major curricular changes.

Elementary education and business appears at first glance to be an unusual combination of academic programs, but a cooperative arrangement is already in place on campus.

The Department of Business Administration, through a small corporate grant, conducts a program for high school seniors entitled Project 25 by 2000. The purpose of the project is to identify and select young people with the potential and desire to establish, own, and operate their own businesses. Twenty people are chosen each year to participate, with all expenses paid for tuition, room and board, books, and supplies, while attending training sessions on campus. The plan is to provide support,

encouragement, and appropriate training for budding entrepreneurs in order to have 25 new industrial businesses in southeastern Oklahoma by the year 2000.

The Department of Elementary Education, through the Gifted Education concentration major, assists the Department of Business Administration in testing and evaluation in identifying candidates for this program. Through the gifted education program, courses in Creative Problem Solving are already part of the curriculum. Combining these two areas allows the University to expand an existing program for the adult community, providing a major in Entrepreneurial Studies with minor and other electives selected form a combination of upper level courses in other University academic departments.

Further support for this plan comes for the proliferation of small businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit of the American people. Naisbitt and Aburdene (1985) predict that corporations will pressure business schools into putting entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship into the curriculum in the near future. According to these authors, the number of universities with courses in entrepreneurship grew from 6 in 1967 to 150 in 1984. And although the number of institutions offering single courses in entrepreneurship is growing, only a handful offer major study in the area.

True to the pattern described by Keller (1983), the majority of the students at the satellite campus areas have completed

their associate degrees through study with junior colleges which also serve the satellite centers. Thus, approximately 64 hours of instruction in a major-minor combination, added to the general educational requirements already completed, provide the core for this new curriculum.

Adapted from a model that is part of the baccalaureate degree program at Hawaii Pacific University, the proposed core of the Entrepreneurial Studies program includes courses already in existence as part of the Business Administration program.

The proposed major will require 40 semester hours composed of required courses marked with an asterisk, and others selected from the list attached.

Course Title	Credit Hours
*Entrepreneurship and Venture Management	3
*Small Business Management	3
*Intrapreneurship and the Corporation	3
*Franchising	3
*Marketing Strategies	3
*Computer Applications for Small Business	3
*Personal Selling	3
*Small Business Project Seminar	3
*Creative Problem Solving	3
Advertising	3
Retail Management	3
Strategic Planning	3
Investments	3
Personal Finance	3
Whole Brain Thinking	3
Small Business Law	3

The additional courses comprising credit toward completion of the 124 semester hours for graduation may be selected from an interdisciplinary combination of upper level courses offered by the regional university, or approved as equivalents.

Replication at other Higher Education Centers would be appropriate for other regional universities. The same program

could also be adapted for evening and weekend offerings on campus.

But the need for additional services must also be addressed. Evening and weekend scheduling of a specially planned program is only the beginning of services that should be made available for the future major consumer of higher education--the adult part-time student.

Student services for non-traditional students is the vehicle in helping adults make responsible decisions in successfully achieving the educational goals. In order for non-traditional students to fully participate in higher education, flexible supportive environments are needed. In order to provide an educational learning environment adults must have access to student services. In other words, their needs must be met before actual learning can take place.

The remainder of this paper will discuss one continuing educational approach to creating a comfortable physical environment by providing student services for adult continuing education students. The services will include: General information, extended hours, child care, commuter service, housing, food service, health care, and placement services. The procedures for these student services has evolved as a gradual process of review and analysis. According to Hall (1980), universities must focus on the student service needs of non-traditional students. Many nontraditional learners find

inadequate information services for their needs. Hall (1980) developed the following list of ideas that has been found effective for nontraditional learners.

General

1. Develop a handbook specifically designed to meet the needs of nontraditional learners. Provide a list and description of student services particularly relevant to adult learners' needs. Include hours of operation and the name and phone number of a contact person or office to call for information that is needed. Distribute the booklet to all adult students.

2. Publish a newsletter for adult students attending weekend and/or evening classes.

3. Encourage the student newspaper to include items about and of interest to adult students.

Extended Hours

1. Extend the hours of administrative offices, learning resources, counseling centers, and faculty and staff to include evenings and weekends.

2. If budget constraints prohibit extended hours on a regular basis, open offices later one or two days a week and some weekends.

Child Care

1. Assess the need for child care services on or near the campus.

2. Evaluate child care facilities to be certain they are available to older students.

3. Offer drop-in baby sitting services at a nominal fee.

4. Provide child care services in the evening and on weekends.

Commuter Service

1. Evaluate the transportation needs of nontraditional students.

2. When possible, make special arrangements for nontraditional students to use transportation services provided by municipal departments, community organizations and cities.

3. Publicize the availability of commuter services.

4. Minimize on-campus transportation problems by clustering classrooms, offices and other facilities.

5. Advise adult students, especially women, which parking lots are near campus.

Housing

1. Examine existing student housing policies to assess whether they have excluded students over a certain age.

2. Provide short-term housing for nontraditional students who take only a few courses but travel long distance.

3. Develop plans for emergency overnight housing.

4. Reserve space in existing dormitories or off campus facilities for weekend college students.

Food Service

1. Extend the hours of full or limited cafeteria service.

2. Locate vending machines near classrooms used by evening or weekend students.

Health Care Services

1. Evaluate existing health insurance policies and health care services to see if part-time nontraditional students are eligible.

2. Offer medical insurance to evening and weekend students.

3. Work with insurance companies to devise a plan that extends individual and/or family coverage to less than full-time students.

4. Ensure that medical insurance policies are free of age limitations which may have a discriminatory impact.

5. Offer medical care services to students who take courses on weekends or evenings.

6. Provide medical services on a flexible schedule.

Student Services

1. Develop materials, workshops, and other programs to help prospective employers understand the benefits of hiring nontraditional learners.

2. Provide employers with information about sex and age discrimination.

3. Encourage student government bodies and other student groups to hold meetings on evenings or weekends.

4. Encourage and assist in the development of a non-traditional student group.

These student services can make a significant difference in making nontraditional students feel a part of the university they are attending (Hall 1980, pp. 8-10).

Summary

Universities must provide student services and programs which meet the needs of adults who are attending classes. Creating a commitment on the part of the University is an on-going task that requires extreme effort on the part of the faculty, staff, and administrative personnel. It's time for recognition of the values set by higher education which produces stronger institutions, and high quality degrees for all students involved in continuing higher education.

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